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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 196th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 3 March 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

CONTENTS

Adoption of the agenda

Report by the Chairman on the Preparatory Meeting for the North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine held at New York on 25 and 26 January 1993

Draft programme of work for 1993

Other matters

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Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN ON THE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE HELD AT NEW YORK ON 25 AND 26 JANUARY 1993

2. The CHAIRMAN, reporting on the preparatory meeting, said that Working Paper No. 1, the provisional programme, was the outcome of consultations with the Committee's Bureau; it had been prepared in response to the recent concern expressed by several NGOs on the need to improve both the quality and level of participation at symposia and to ensure better implementation of the recommendations of participating NGOs. He recommended its adoption by the Committee.

3. The provisional programme would permit an examination of the current situation in the occupied territories and the need to protect the Palestinian people, the ongoing peace process and the formulation of efficient strategies by the NGOs concerned.

4. The theme proposed for the symposium to be held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 30 June to 2 July 1993 was "Building for Peace and Palestine: Priorities for the Second Decade of the NGO Movement". The term "second decade" referred to the fact that the NGOs had begun working on that question for some 10 years and that they felt that so long as the relevant United Nations resolutions were not implemented, they would have a role to play.

5. The draft programme provided for the organization of four round tables at which speakers from Israel, Palestine, the United States and Canada would be invited to make statements and participate in the discussions. The programme also provided for six workshops on specific questions.

6. One of the innovations proposed by the North American Coordinating Committee was the establishment of seven standing committees composed of NGOs involved in areas of activity in which they had special competence. These areas and the names of their organizers were indicated in Working Paper No. 1. The standing committees would ensure that the discussions in the workshops of the symposium were more substantive and would monitor and promote the implementation of the recommendations made by participants.

7. In accordance with established practice, the names of several speakers had been proposed in the provisional programme. The Committee was required to approve those names, leaving open the possibility that other speakers might be proposed following consultations. The Division for Palestinian Rights would ascertain whether all the proposed participants in the round tables, workshops and committees would be available. In its final decision on what invitations should be sent out, the Bureau of the Committee would bear in mind that funds had been allocated by the Organization to cover the travel of six guest speakers.

(The Chairman)

8. Members of the Bureau had been impressed by the determination of NGOs to provide all the assistance possible to the Palestinian people in its struggle for national independence and a Palestinian State. He expressed the Bureau's support for the North American Coordinating Committee's efforts to improve the structure as well as the modalities of the symposium.

9. If there were no comments, the CHAIRMAN would take it that the Committee approved Working Paper No. 1.

10. It was so decided.

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1993 (A/AC.183/1993/CRP.1)

11. Mr. CAMILLIERI (Malta), Rapporteur, said that the Bureau had held consultations regarding the draft programme of work for 1993, and it had been finalized at a meeting of a working group of the Committee on 25 February 1993. Considerable thought had been given to the role to be played by the Committee with the support of the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information. Section I of the draft programme of work summarized the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Section II referred to the recommendations made by the Committee in its previous report and identified a number of priority issues to be addressed by the Committee in 1993 in the light of the political developments of 1992 and the current status of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. Section III was concerned with activities of the Committee and of the Division for Palestinian Rights, including the establishment of a computer-based information system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL).

12. Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana) said that the draft programme of work seemed to be in keeping with the mandates of the resolutions emanating from the General Assembly and merited the Committee's full approval. In connection with the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights, the Committee could play a special role in energizing the efforts of non-governmental organizations in order to achieve a political impact. He was gratified that the focus of the Committee's work continued to be on mobilizing public opinion in Europe and the United States rather than preaching to the converted. The Committee should try to maximize its political work and expand its activities beyond pro forma symposia and seminars.

13. The Observer for Palestine was keeping the Committee informed of what was happening on the ground. He wondered whether the Secretary-General's special representative on the Middle East could be invited to appear before the Committee so as to help strengthen the Committee's role.

14. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee's agenda was broad enough to include the question of the World Conference on Human Rights. The Division for Palestinian Rights could make arrangements for the Secretary-General's special representative on the Middle East to appear before the Committee. He agreed that the reports of the Observer for Palestine were useful and encouraged him to continue to brief the Committee regularly on the situation and on the position of the PLO.

15. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that he supported the proposals made by the representative of Guyana. It was important for the Committee to look into ways of maximizing its input into the World Conference on Human Rights as a Committee or through the activities of non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine. He also supported the proposal to invite the Secretary-General's special representative on the Middle East to appear before the Committee and was in favour of issuing similar invitations to high-ranking officials from the Secretariat and political figures of the region.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft programme of work for 1993.

17. It was so decided.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had agreed to host the European Seminar on the theme of "Assistance to the Palestinian People" from 26 to 29 April 1993 at its headquarters in Paris and initial preparations were under way. The seminar represented a new focus for the Committee's work and had been specifically requested by the General Assembly in resolution 47/170. Consultations were being conducted with a view to encouraging active and concrete participation in the seminar by donor countries, United Nations bodies and agencies and non-governmental organizations already involved in projects of assistance to the occupied Palestinian territory. A planning mission from the Secretariat was now in Paris to make all the necessary arrangements for the seminar. The Bureau would report to the Committee as soon as possible with regard to various aspects of the event.

19. As indicated in the programme of work, the Government of Senegal had agreed to host the African Seminar and the African NGO Symposium in Dakar; the exact dates would be determined at a later stage.

20. In accordance with established practice, the Bureau of the Committee would continue preparations for the various activities indicated in the programme of work and would report back to the Committee in due course.

OTHER MATTERS

21. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that the main concern of his delegation continued to be the matter of the Palestinians deported by Israel on 17 December 1992. So far, Israel had not implemented Security Council resolution 799 (1992) nor had the Security Council considered the Secretary-General's report submitted to the Council in pursuance of resolution 799 on 25 January 1993.

22. Since the Committee had adopted a position at its last meeting, there had been some important developments on that subject. The first was the informal consultation meeting of the Security Council on 12 February 1993 to which the President of the Council had summoned the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations. At the subsequent press conference the President had declared that the Palestinian people had never supported those deportations nor had it been party to it and expressed the hope that all members of the Security Council were still committed to the objectives confirmed by their unanimous vote on resolution 799.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

On 16 February 1993, in his capacity as the Observer for Palestine, he had sent an official letter to the President of the Security Council in which he had made it abundantly clear that no document had been issued by the Council announcing any official action it had taken with respect to the 12 February meeting or since the adoption of resolution 799. In the circumstances, the Security Council was still duty-bound to consider the Secretary-General's report and his recommendations and to guarantee the immediate implementation of the resolution.

23. Another important development was the visit of the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Warren Christopher, to the Middle East from 18 to 24 February 1993. His delegation hoped that the visit would lead to positive results and welcomed the new United States position because it should enable the United States to play a major role in the ongoing peace process. For example, the United States and other parties involved in the peace process would attend some bilateral sessions, the United States would submit specific proposals aimed at reconciling differences and secure recognition from both sides of the importance of the peace process.

24. Moreover, the following points had been agreed upon in principle following the meeting of the Palestinian side with the United States side in Jerusalem: the United States would submit a written assurance on the importance of the peace process and on the importance of Jerusalem; the United States would emphasize the illegality of the deportations; Israel would comply with the requirement not to resort to deportations or evictions in the future; Israel would declare its willingness to abide by Security Council resolution 799 (1992) and accelerate the return of all the deportees; the 2,000 Palestinians who had been deported since 1967, would be allowed to return; and Israel would put an end to the human rights violations in the occupied territories.

25. Thus far, no serious efforts had been made to implement the six points. Although a letter had been sent by the United States side in implementation of the first point it had not made any mention of Jerusalem. There had been no positive developments on the Israeli side.

26. Mr. Abbas, a member of the Executive Committee of the PLO, had recently travelled to Moscow and met Mr. Kozyrev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and some other officials. The Russian Federation, a co-sponsor of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, had a significant role to play in the peace process. He had not yet received details of the meeting, but was confident that the Palestinian position had been conveyed in full to the Russian side.

27. A meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Arab States that were neighbours of Israel, namely, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria, would take place in the near future to consider questions relating to the peace process and the deportees and arrive at a unified Arab position.

28. The problem of the deportees must be resolved. Israel had dealt a deadly blow to the peace process by the deportation; until that situation was remedied, the PLO could not participate in the negotiations. The Security Council must make a comprehensive analysis of the Secretary-General's report on the matter and take the necessary measures; Israel's action undermined the credibility of

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

the Security Council and of the United Nations in general. The Committee had a very important role to play in that connection.

29. His delegation would meet with the President of the Security Council shortly to consider the matter and make sure it was included in the Security Council's agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.

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8 September 1993

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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE
RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 197th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 21 April 1993, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

CONTENTS

Adoption of the agenda

Report by the Chairman on the meeting of the Bureau of the Committee with the President of the Security Council (24 March 1993)

Report by the Chairman on the Preparatory Meeting for the Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 5-6 April 1993

United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNESCO, Paris, 26-29 April 1993

Other matters

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN ON THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (24 MARCH 1993)

2. The CHAIRMAN said that the Bureau had held a meeting with the President of the Security Council to discuss its concerns over the grave situation in the occupied territories and the sending of a letter to the Secretary-General and the President of the Council on that subject. In view of the inaction of the Council, the Bureau had called for the publication of the Secretary-General's report regarding the refusal of Israel to comply with Council resolution 799 (1992), and had explained to the President its reasons for the letter. The President had promised to refer the matter to the Council forthwith. At the same time, other initiatives had been taken to reactivate the Palestinian issue in the Council by, inter alia, the Group of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The Committee was bound to take a close interest in the fate of the more than 400 Palestinians unjustly deported by Israel, and to convey its severe condemnation of that action to the Council. While it was hoped that all the deportees would return to their homes, it was felt that periodic contacts between the Bureau of the Committee, the Security Council and the Secretariat were useful in order to clarify the position of the Committee and to establish a dialogue. The intention was therefore to continue such actions and to extend them to other parties from which active support might be expected.

3. The Bureau should therefore intensify its contacts with such bodies as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity in order to keep them well informed of the situation in Palestine. He appealed to the secretariat of the Division for Palestinian Rights for assistance to that end. As members of one or more of those bodies, many members of the Committee could also play a useful role. The documents produced or collected by the Division should be given the widest possible distribution and circulated systematically to the executive heads of the above-mentioned bodies. The Committee should also be more responsive to the invitations received from them by sending, whenever possible, delegations with up-to-date documentation in order to help to draft pertinent resolutions on Palestine. The Committee was called upon to follow new developments in the Palestinian issue closely and to take bold new initiatives. It should not remain content merely to pass resolutions and hold seminars, but rather should make its presence more keenly felt not only by its supporters, but also by those who had reservations with regard to it. The financial resources available to the Committee should enable it to send missions, when necessary, to speak directly to Governments and other interested bodies. He requested the Bureau to examine those matters and to make concrete proposals to enhance the work of the Committee.

4. Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan) said that his delegation was a staunch supporter of the Committee's efforts, and commended its initiative in contacting the President of the Security Council. Afghanistan was very much in favour of

(Mr. Farhadi, Afghanistan)

periodic contacts with the various bodies mentioned. The Committee should remain in close touch with new developments concerning Palestine and keep the Security Council and other bodies informed thereof. The Chairman's report contained several important concrete proposals, which he hoped would be made available in written form.

5. Mr. HIDALGO-BASULTO (Cuba) thanked the Chairman for his succinct and precise summary of the very useful meeting with the President of the Security Council. He welcomed the Chairman's timely initiatives and was confident that the Committee could indeed usefully expand its contacts. He therefore supported the Chairman's proposals.

6. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) thanked the Chairman and the Committee for their meeting with the President of the Security Council. He hoped that such contacts would be developed in the future. Despite the Chairman's contacts and despite the official request by the Chairman of the Group of Arab States for a meeting of the Security Council to consider the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and the support for that request by many countries, including the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, no such meeting had been held. That seemed to be the general procedure prevailing in the Council with respect to the Palestinian question, as well as other issues such as Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Palestinian question thus provided a new opportunity to examine procedures in the Council in order to improve its working methods. He appreciated the Chairman's remarks aimed at revitalizing the political and practical role of the Committee. In particular, he supported the two specific proposals contained in the report, which he hoped would be distributed.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that the report would be made available, as requested by the representative of Afghanistan and the Observer for Palestine.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN ON THE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE TENTH UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, GENEVA, 5-6 APRIL 1993

8. The CHAIRMAN said that at the Meeting, preparations had also been made for the Seventh United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine. The Meeting had been attended by representatives of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) and the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP).

9. Working paper No. 3 contained the provisional programme for the Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, to be held at Geneva or Vienna from 25 to 27 August 1993. ICCP had requested that the theme of the Meeting should be "Renewing the United Nations NGO commitment to Palestinian national and human rights". The working paper referred to the five plenary sessions proposed for the Meeting and listed the panellists and speakers who had been invited to attend each session. No specific request had yet been made for workshops; the number and topics of the workshops would be determined subsequently. The Committee was requested to approve the provisional programme for the Meeting, including the names of the panellists proposed, on the

(The Chairman)

understanding that additional names might be proposed to the Committee at a later stage.

10. Working paper No. 4 contained the provisional programme for the European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine to be held at Geneva on 23 and 24 August 1993. Its theme would be "The Middle East peace process: Palestinian rights and development - A challenge to Europe". Only one plenary session had been requested, to which four speakers had been invited. It was proposed that two workshops should be held simultaneously on the first day of the Symposium. The Committee was requested to approve the provisional programme and the names of the panellists and resource persons, on the understanding that additional names might be proposed to the Committee at a later stage. The Bureau and the Division for Palestinian Rights would remain in close contact with the NGO Coordinating Committees with regard to the eminent personalities to be invited. The Division would ascertain the availability of all the suggested panellists and resource persons. Provisions had been made for the United Nations to bear the expenses of 15 invitations to the International Meeting and 6 invitations to the European Symposium. During the Preparatory Meeting, the delegation of the Committee and the Acting Chief of the Division had held useful consultations with the Chairmen and members of ICCP, ECCP and the other Coordinating Committees regarding future activities and coordination.

11. He took it that the Committee wished to approve working papers Nos. 3 and 4.

12. It was so decided.

UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, UNESCO, PARIS, 26-29 APRIL 1993

13. The CHAIRMAN said that the programme for the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, which would be held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 26 to 29 April 1993, was contained in working paper No. 2.

14. He took it that the Committee wished to approve working paper No. 2.

15. It was so decided.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee delegation to the Seminar would be composed of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Rapporteur and the Permanent Observer for Palestine. Consultations were still being held to ascertain whether another ambassador might be able to join the Committee delegation for that event.

17. Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan) said that the members of the Committee should assist countries that did not have missions in Paris or permanent representation in UNESCO to attend the Seminar.

18. Mr. NASIER (Indonesia) said that the President of Indonesia had been invited to attend the Seminar in his capacity as current Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. He hoped to be able to inform the Committee

(Mr. Nasier, Indonesia)

of the President's response by the end of the week. He inquired whether it would be possible for the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to make a general statement at the Seminar.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would be pleased to hear a statement by the delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which would also have the opportunity to make statements during the Seminar.

OTHER MATTERS

20. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that, at the 196th meeting of the Committee, his delegation had reviewed the results of the visit by the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Warren Christopher, to the Middle East, and had informed the Committee of the six points of agreement that had been arrived at by the Palestinian and American sides. Since that meeting, two Palestinian delegations had visited Washington: the first had been headed by Faisal Husseini and the second by Haider Abdel Shafi. The second delegation had been in Washington at the same time as a number of Arab delegations that were holding preliminary consultations with the United States Administration on the question of a political settlement. Palestine had also had contacts with the Russian Federation, and its contacts with the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had resulted in the planning of a meeting of the Committee of Nine on Palestine.

21. The United States side had put forward a number of proposals, such as the idea that the Palestine Liberation Organization should be a full partner in the negotiating process. The United States Administration had also expressed its readiness to accept Mr. Faisal Husseini as a member of the Palestinian delegation. The Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Mr. Edward Djerejian, had made a number of promises, including the return of Palestinian deportees to the occupied territories.

22. On 16 April 1993, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt had held a meeting to discuss the Arab position on the question, and had concluded that it was not possible to resume the negotiations at the appointed time; that position had been made known to the Consulate General of the United States of America in Jerusalem.

23. On 17 April, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs had agreed to suspend the meeting and go to Cairo to participate in the meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers for Foreign Affairs. The meeting had been held on 18 April at the headquarters of the League of Arab States and had led to some improvements in inter-Arab relations.

24. On 19 April, President Yasser Arafat had visited Cairo, where he had met with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, the Egyptian President's adviser on political matters, as well as a number of other Arab Minsters for Foreign Affairs. President Arafat had then travelled to Latakia, Syria Arab Republic, to meet with President Hafez-al-Assad, with whom he had reviewed the overall situation.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

25. On 20 April, the Palestine leadership had held a meeting in Amman under the chairmanship of President Arafat and with the participation of a large number of Palestinian officials, including members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. It had been difficult to reach a final decision on participation in the negotiations in view of the largely negative position of the Palestinian population of the occupied territories.

26. The final decision had been taken on the morning of 21 April. At a press conference held in Damascus, President Arafat had declared that Palestine agreed to participate in the ninth round of negotiations, which would begin on 27 April. Immediately after that statement, the four Arab States participating in the peace process had adopted a decision to the same effect.

27. His delegation expected that the United States Administration would fulfil all of the promises it had made, and it also expected a substantive change in Israel's attitude.

28. As it prepared for the ninth round of negotiations, his delegation hoped that it would have broad international support, including the support of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.